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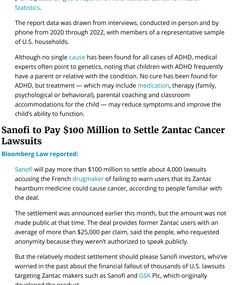
04/23/24 BIG PHARMA

Some 11% of U.S. Children Have Been Diagnosed With ADHD + More

The Defender's Big Pharma Watch delivers the latest headlines related to pharmaceutical companies and their products, including vaccines, drugs, and medical devices and treatments. The views expressed in the below excerpts from other news sources do not necessarily reflect the views of The Defender. Our goal is to provide readers with breaking news that affects human health and the environment.

By The Defender Staff



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Some 11% of U.S. Children Have Been Diagnosed With ADHD

The Washington Post reported:

More than 1 in 10 children in the United States — about 11% of those ages 5 to 17 — have been diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), according to a report from the National Center for Health Statistics.

The report data was drawn from interviews, conducted in person and by phone from 2020 through 2022, with members of a representative sample of U.S. households.

Although no single cause has been found for all cases of ADHD, medical experts often point to genetics, noting that children with ADHD frequently have a parent or relative with the condition. No cure has been found for ADHD, but treatment — which may include medications, therapy (family, psychological or behavioral), parental coaching and classroom accommodations for the child — may reduce symptoms and improve the child's ability to function.

Sanofi to Pay $100 Million to Settle Zantac Cancer Lawsuits

Bloomberg Law reported:

Sanofi will pay more than $100 million to settle about 4,000 lawsuits accusing the French drugmaker of failing to warn users that its Zantac heartburn medicine could cause cancer, according to people familiar with the deal.

The settlement was announced earlier this month, but the amount was not made public at that time. The deal provides former Zantac users with an average of more than $25,000 per claim, said the people, who requested anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly.

But the relatively modest settlement should please Sanofi investors, who've worried in the past about the financial fallout of thousands of U.S. lawsuits targeting Zantac makers such as Sanofi and GSK Plc, which originally developed the product.

Alzheimer's Drug Adoption in U.S. Slowed by Doctors' Skepticism

Reuters reported:

Nine months into the U.S. launch of the first drug proven to slow the advance of Alzheimer's, Eisai and Biogen's Leqembi is facing an unexpected hurdle to widespread use: an entrenched belief among some doctors that treating the memory-robbing disease is futile.

Alzheimer's experts had anticipated bottlenecks due to Leqembi's requirements, which include additional diagnostic tests, twice-monthly infusions and regular brain scans to guard against potentially lethal side effects. And those issues have played a role in slow adoption since the drug was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, according to interviews with 20 neurologists and geriatricians from rural, urban, academic and community practices in 19 states.

In interviews with Reuters, seven doctors treating patients for Alzheimer's attributed their own reluctance to prescribe Leqembi to concerns about the drug's efficacy, cost and risks. Other doctors have raised concerns about the risk of brain swelling and bleeding associated with Leqembi as well as the costs associated with the $26,500 annual drug, frequent MRIs and twice-monthly infusions.

"There are significant risks associated with these drugs, there are significant costs, and I would say there is marginal benefit," said Dr. Eric Widera, a geriatrician and professor at the University of California San Francisco, referring to amyloid-lowering treatments.

Is There a Vaccine for H5N1 Influenza? — and How Quickly Could It Be Deployed Should It Be Needed?

MedPage Today reported:

On the heels of a multi-state outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza A (H5N1) in dairy cows, experts told MedPage Today that a trio of H5N1 vaccines for humans has already been developed and stockpiled in the U.S.

Nahid Bhadelia, MD, of the Boston University Center on Emerging Infectious Diseases, noted that it is "important to be talking about vaccines," including the current stockpile, the capacity to manufacture new doses if need be, and the designs of the current vaccines.

A spokesperson for the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) told MedPage Today in an emailed statement that it is monitoring the situation closelyopen in a new tab or window, along with partners from the CDC, FDA, Department of Agriculture, and White House.

ASPR's National Pre-Pandemic Influenza Vaccine Stockpile (NPIVS) is "continually generating antigens that are matched to new strains of interest, and we have two antigens that are well-matched to the currently circulating strain of H5N1," the spokesperson added. "Hundreds of thousands of doses could be deployed within weeks pending regulatory action, and over 100 million doses could be deployed in the coming months."

ASPR's industry partners include CSL Seqirus, GSK, and Sanofi, which have H5N1 vaccines licensed for use in the U.S. Sanofi-developed egg-based A/H5N1 vaccines as early as 2004 and received the first U.S. license for such a vaccine in 2007, a spokesperson for the company told MedPage Today.

J&J, Kenvue Told to Pay $45 Million to Baby Powder User's Family

Bloomberg reported:

Johnson & Johnson and Kenvue Inc. were ordered to pay $45 million to the family of an Illinois woman who blamed the companies' baby powders for giving her a fatal cancer in what was the first verdict against the J&J spinoff in a decade-long litigation over the product.

Jurors hearing the case in Chicago late Friday concluded Kenvue was 70% responsible for the death of Theresa Garcia, a mother of six and a grandmother, who died in 2020 after developing mesothelioma, a type of cancer linked to asbestos exposure. Her family alleged J&J and Kenvue's predecessor firm sold their talcum-based baby powder knowing it was tainted with asbestos, according to court filings.

The panel found J&J and one of its units were responsible for the remaining 30% of the verdict, one of the first wins by a talc plaintiff since a judge last year threw out the bankruptcy filing of a J&J unit aimed at forcing a settlement of the talc cases. A Florida jury rejected similar claims against the company on Thursday.

J&J has maintained that its talc-based products don't cause cancer and that it has marketed its baby powder appropriately for more than a century.

"J&J knew that asbestos-exposure, including asbestos exposure from inhaling asbestos-containing talc, can and does cause fatal diseases such as mesothelioma," the family said in its lawsuit against the companies.

Drugmaker Novartis Climbs After Guidance Rise on Sales of Blockbuster Drugs

CNBC reported:

Shares of Swiss drugmaker Novartis climbed as much as 4.8% in early deals Tuesday after the company raised its full-year guidance following better-than-expected first-quarter results. The stock pared gains slightly to trade up 3.2% by 1:50 p.m. London time.

Novartis' net sales rose 11% in the first three months of the year, while core operating income increased 22% over the same period.

CEO Vas Narasimhan said the growth is solid across all its major brands, which include blockbuster heart failure drug Entresto and psoriasis drug Cosentyx.

The company said 2024 net sales are now anticipated to pick up by a high single- to low double-digit percentage, up from a previous outlook of mid-single-digit growth.

Contaminated Cough Syrup in Africa No Longer Available — WHO

Reuters reported:

A contaminated batch of Benylin Paediatric Syrup is no longer available in the African countries where it was sold, the World Health Organization said on Monday.

Earlier this month, Nigeria recalled a batch of children's cough and allergy medicine after tests found that it contained unacceptable levels of the toxin, diethylene glycol.

Five other African countries have also pulled the product from shelves — Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and South Africa, where the drug was made.

The recalled batch of Benylin syrup was made by Johnson & Johnson (JNJ.N) in South Africa in May 2021, although Kenvue (KVUE.N) now owns the brand after a spin-off from J&J last year.

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tamaproudAmerican
20 hours ago
One of my kids was diagnosed with adhd years ago. He was given several meds over the years, but none worked. I found a wonderful child psychologist who worked with him for several years and that helped a lot.
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Peter van der Sluijs tamaproudAmerican
14 hours ago
Finding the right person for treatment is not easy I am happy you found a REAL psychologist caring for his patients without interference of BP!
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